

Wisconsin State FFA Degree Handbook

Wisconsin Association of FFA, Inc.
Wisconsin FFA Center, Inc.

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The Wisconsin FFA Degree Application is located on the Wisconsin FFA Website <<http://www.wisconsinffa.org/pg-applications.cfm>> and the DPI Website <<http://www.dpi.wisconsin.gov/ffa/ffadoc.html>>.

For Star Applicants: Please read the section in this packet “Applying for State FFA Degree Star”. The applications submitted for Star in Agribusiness, Star Farmer, Star In Agricultural Placement, and Star in Agriscience will include additional information. The candidate must complete the entire State FFA Degree application plus the American Star Battery. The American Star Battery is found on the National FFA website at <http://www.ffa.org/programs/degree/index.html>. The candidates must include all the additional pages, plus attach the SAE agreements, resume, three letters of recommendation and supporting photographs. Candidates do not have to include the **Personal History** pages.

STATE FFA DEGREE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Summarized from the State FFA Constitution Article V. Section D.

- ◆ Completed at least 360 hours (2 years) of Agriculture Education Instruction while in high school
- ◆ Have at least 24 months of FFA Membership at the time of application
- ◆ Have received the Greenhand and Chapter FFA Degrees
- ◆ Have earned and productively invested \$1500 or worked 1000 hours in SAE
- ◆ At least five different FFA activities above the chapter level
- ◆ Participate in the planning and completion of the chapter Program of Activities
- ◆ Candidate must list at least 6 skills or competencies gained through SAE
- ◆ At least 2 different public speeches (agricultural), each at least 5 minutes in length
- ◆ Must demonstrate leadership by performing 10 parliamentary procedure activities
- ◆ Candidate must have a satisfactory record of scholarship, as certified by a school administrator
- ◆ Must have served in at least four of the following six capacities
 1. Chapter FFA Officer
 2. FFA Committee Chair
 3. FFA Committee Member
 4. Official State FFA Representative in National or Regional FFA Activity
 5. School Activity (not FFA)
 6. Community Activity (not FFA)
- ◆ Must be financially correct

APPLYING FOR STATE FFA DEGREE STAR

1. Who is eligible?

The eligibility for “Stars” is similar to the eligibility for Proficiency Awards. You may apply while you are in high school or when you are out of high school, as long as you have been out of school for not more than one year.

2. How many “Star” categories are there?

There are four categories – Star Farmer, Star In Agribusiness, Star In Agricultural Placement, and Star In Agriscience.

3. How many “Stars” can be nominated from a chapter?

A chapter should submit only one candidate for each of the “Star” areas.

4. Can an individual be nominated for more than one “Star” area?

Yes. A member may be nominated for more than one “Star” area and would be eligible to win in multiple areas. However, in the history of the program, no student has ever been a finalist in more than one area.

5. How do you nominate an individual for “Star?”

The applications submitted for “Star” will need to include additional information. The candidate must complete the entire State FFA Degree application **plus** the Stars Over America Battery found on the National FFA website at <http://www.ffa.org/programs/degree/index.html>. The candidates must include all the additional information in that application, plus attach the SAE agreements, resume, three recommendations and supporting photographs. Candidates do not have to include the Personal History pages.

6. How are the “Stars” selected?

The FFA Board of Directors reviews all “Star” applications for minimum qualifications. Applications that meet the minimum requirements advance for further consideration. It is important that all minimums are met and that the application is complete when submitted.

A committee of judges will select up to 10 finalists in the Star Farmer category, up to 10 finalists in the Star in Agricultural Placement category, up to 5 finalists in the Star in Agribusiness category and up to 5 finalists in the Star in Agriscience category. At the State FFA Convention, a panel of judges interviews the Star finalists. The judges select the winners and the winners are announced on stage.

7. How are the “Star” finalists recognized at the State FFA Convention?

All finalists will be recognized on stage at the State FFA Convention and receive checks and trophies. The top 5 finalists in each area will have a video clip produced about their SAE and their accomplishments which is shown at the State FFA Convention. Photos and accomplishments of these individuals will be taken from the Star application submitted to the Wisconsin FFA Center.

CLARIFICATION ON “ACTIVITIES ABOVE THE CHAPTER LEVEL”

The following activities are considered “above the chapter level.”

1. Greenhand Conference
2. Sectional Leadership Workshop
3. County or regional officer training workshops
4. Half-time Leadership Workshop
5. Made for Excellence
6. Experiencing Discovery, Growth and Excellence Conference (EDGE)
7. Advanced Leadership Development Conference (ALD)
8. Washington Leadership Conference
9. State FFA Convention
10. National FFA Convention
11. Participation at multi-chapter, regional or state Career Development Events.
12. District, sectional, or state speaking contests. (Competing at district and sectional count as two activities.)
13. Participation as a FFA member in an FFA sponsored regional, state, or national contest
14. Participation in:
State Proficiency Award Program,
Agri-Entrepreneurship Program
AgriScience Student Award Program
Agriscience Fair
15. State Band, Chorus or Talent Participation at State and National.
16. Participation in WJDA convention, Co-ops Yes! or Farm Forum where the FFA member is representing the FFA Chapter.
17. Exhibiting at county or regional fairs as a representative from your FFA Chapter.
18. Exhibitor at State Fair – as a representative from your FFA Chapter.
19. “Ag Ventures Day” or participation in an FFA related educational activity at the Wisconsin State Fair.

Please note: To have **five** activities above the chapter level, the activities must be five different activities. Two trips to the State FFA Convention is counted as **one** activity above the chapter level.

The following activities are **not** considered “above the chapter level.”

1. Local, sectional or state FFA recreational events.
2. Participation on field trips (i.e., World Dairy Expo, Farm Technology Days, State Fair)
Exception: If the members are representing their FFA Chapter in a specific contest or FFA-related activity at the event, then it can be considered.
3. Breed association activities

A word of caution:

It is impossible to list every FFA activity that counts or doesn’t count in this State FFA Degree Handbook. When considering whether or not it is an acceptable activity refer to the definition below. The activity must be an **FFA activity** and be **above the chapter level**.

Definition: An activity is defined as an FFA activity when:

- A.** An FFA organization (local, state or national) sponsors the program or activity.
- B.** An organization other than FFA, sponsors the activity and FFA chapters are invited to participate. An example would include Farm Forum. The Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation sponsors Farm Forum and invites 4-H clubs and FFA Chapters to participate. This is, therefore, an FFA activity above the chapter level.

Definition: Above the chapter level

It is considered above the chapter level if it’s a multi-chapter activity where at least one other member from at least one other chapter attends.

The only exception is FFA athletic/recreational activities. Given the fact that there are numerous other eligible activities and to retain the prestige of receiving the highest degree on the state level, athletic sporting events are **not** considered eligible activities for participation above the chapter level.

AVOIDING COMMON MISTAKES WHEN FILLING OUT THE STATE FFA DEGREE APPLICATION

1. Use the most current application posted on the Wisconsin FFA or DPI website. The application is posted at both <http://www.wisconsinffa.org/pg-applications.cfm> and <http://www.dpi.wisconsin.gov/ffa/ffadoc.html>
2. Make sure to read the “WI Instructions” page. The first page of the State FFA Degree Excel document.
3. Begin entering information on the cover page and move through the pages numerically. When you enter information on the “Cover” page and “Cover B” page, the information will be transferred to the “WI Cover” and “Cover B” pages.
4. Do not use decimal points when entering numbers. This will cause “ERROR” to appear in your requirement columns and you won’t see where the problem is because the decimals hide once they are entered. The new application should not allow for any decimals to be inputted. You will get an error message.
5. Financial records for the current year do not count. These have to be noted as “Records in Progress” and do not count toward the requirements for the state FFA degree. They can be listed on page 2 but not included in the pages that would calculate hours or dollars.
6. Make sure that Page 2 of the application follows what you have listed for your SAE in the rest of the application. If you have 400 hours listed for your Ag Sales SAE for a particular year, you should have 400 listed on page 3 or 4 that correspond.
7. Make sure the year your FFA membership starts is the year the records start. You can be an FFA member before you have an SAE but you can’t list years of records before you started FFA.
8. Don’t list assets twice, if you list them as current assets, they can’t also be non-current.
9. Make sure on page 8a and 8b to “X” the box indicating the year for the last year of your records. This should be done for all applications whether it is an entrepreneurship program or placement program. If you have a placement program, putting the “X” above the last year of records cleans up the application so no error messages appear.
10. If you barter or have ag labor exchanged for non-cash operating expenses (Pages 8a and 8b, section 1 lines f and g), you need to list what the amount is for the non-cash expense operating expenses (Pages 8a and 8b, section 2 lines c and e). These should technically add up to the same unless there was some unique situation which would have occurred.

11. On page 9, realistically a student may have some cash on hand or in savings and should have some personal expenses that could be listed. Leaving this as “0” does not always provide the most accurate picture of the student’s overall net worth.
12. If you have an entrepreneurship program, you cannot list your entrepreneurship SAE hours on pages 3 and 4. If you have other hours for other projects in your overall SAE, you can have a combination of both entrepreneurship and placement. However, if you are counting hours working with your animals and also counting your animals as your entrepreneurship program, this is not allowed.
13. Don’t forget to complete pages 13a and 13b of the Wisconsin required pages of the degree. This includes additional state requirements needed in order to receive the State FFA Degree.
14. Clearly define the 5 activities above the chapter level. Activities that FFA advisors are not familiar with can cause confusion as to whether they qualify as above the chapter level or not. See list in this document of currently accepted activities above the chapter level. Activities can only be counted as one even if there are multiple years of participation in that one event. Plan ahead for students who potentially can earn degrees and have them attend state level activities, workshops, etc. in order to fulfill the requirement.
15. On page 12, list the years of participation in the events listed. Do not put “X” in the column of the level of participation.
16. On Page 13b, the two speeches listed need to be “Agriculturally-related” speeches.
17. When completing questions 22 and 23 on page 13b, these activities should also be listed on page 12.
18. Were taxes filed? Either yes or no should be checked on Cover Page B.
19. If you are making changes to your application, it is really best to print out a new copy of the completed application so that all pages are dated the same. Also if you adjusted any numbers, by printing out a new application you will know that proper transferring occurred. If you are only replacing the first or second page or a few pages in the back, you can just reprint those pages and it will be accepted.
20. Don’t forget to have all signatures.
21. Punctuation/grammar: Make sure you proofread the application in these areas. Have the English teacher help-----cross curriculum work can be utilized here. Administrators like it. English teachers like helping out and learning about the student’s SAEs.
22. On any application, the numbers need to match. Hours on page two of the State/American FFA Degrees need to match the hours worked.
23. Ask for help/advice. Other teachers can notice something you miss or make suggestions that might make the application better

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STATE FFA DEGREE APPLICATION

1. How do I determine whether or not the students has met the minimum number of hours worked and dollars earned and invested if they are using the combination method?

To determine if the student has met the minimum requirements, you find out the number of total hours worked and the number of dollars earned **and** productively invested. To find the total hours worked, look on page 4, Grand Total. To determine the number of dollars earned and invested you need to look at page 11 lines 26c and line 23. Line 26c shows you how much was earned. Line 23 shows you how much was productively invested. Since our constitution states “earned **and** productively invested: you need to look at both lines 26c and line 23 and use whichever line is less.

Then you determine what percentage of each has been completed. For example, if they have worked 600 hours, that equals 60% of the 1000 hour requirement ($600/1000 = 60\%$). If they have earned and invested \$570, that equals 38% of the \$1500 requirement ($\$570/\$1000 = 38\%$). Then you add the two percentages together. If they equal 100% or more, the student would satisfy the minimum requirement. In this case, the student has only met 98% of the requirement and therefore would not meet the minimum requirement for the State FFA Degree.

2. How long after graduation from high school can I apply for my State FFA Degree?

Members can apply for their degree as long as they are still an FFA member. This means they could apply for their State FFA Degree and receive their degree up until the fourth convention following the date of their high school graduation. This could be extended if the person has served in the military.

3. What is the difference between a current asset and a non-current asset?

A current asset is cash, near cash and assets normally convertible into cash within one year without disrupting the business. Non-current assets are those assets which are not sold and converted into cash during a year.

4. Feed costs were bartered for...how do I record that?

Feed costs that were bartered for are recorded on page 8a & b line 2c. Any expenses which are bartered for (line 2c or 2e) must also be included on line 1f or 1g on Page 8a & b.

5. I brought a truck/car for transportation to and from my place of work. Can this be counted as a productively invested asset?

Only a percentage of the cost of the vehicle can be used. For example, if a student purchases a \$5,000 vehicle and it is used 50% of the time for work related activities, you may record \$2,500 as productively invested. Likewise, a percentage of the liability of the vehicle can be considered a “liability on productive assets.”

6. My line number 30 (page 11) is greater than Line 29 (page 11). What did I do wrong? How can I fix it?

Line 29 is the difference between the total funds received during the years covered by the application, minus the total identified use of these funds. Based on the information in the application, this is the maximum amount a member's equity can increase by. If line 30 is greater it is because:

A. You probably failed to identify (report) all the sources of income.

Double Check the following sources:

1. Candidate's return to capital, labor and management from SAE program (Page 11, line 26a).
2. Grand total net earnings from candidate's wage earning SAE program (Page 11, line 26b).
3. Grand total earnings from agricultural activities not part of the candidates SAE program (Page 11, line 27a).
4. Grand total earnings from nonagricultural activities (Page 11, line 27c).
5. Grand total income other than earnings (Page 11, line 27d)

B. You may have included something in the Balance sheet that is not accurate and therefore inflates your gain in owner's equity.

C. You may have neglected to report a liability that the student has.

D. You may have neglected to report a beginning value for an item that was in the student's possession when they came into your program and may or may not still be a part of the student's net worth. (Some students report value of stocks, bonds or insurance when they apply for an award and do not report any such asset when they begin in the agriculture program. This omission is what causes the error.)

7. What goes on page two of the State FFA Degree application?

All the hours you worked and where

All the totals of animals you had during the year

Total acres you farmed during the year

Example

Alsum Produce	113 hours
Market hogs	35
Holstein cows	11
Bull calves	4
Heifer calves	7
Sows	3

You list everything on page two even if you sold it. It shows the scope of your activities for the year. Livestock on hand shows up on the inventory pages and shows what was on hand on December 31. The fact that some were sold would be shown in the cash sales line on page 8a and 8b for the state degree and 6a & 6 b for the proficiencies.

8. How do I show depreciation?

You show it on the inventory pages in the State/American degree. It should also show up on pages 8a & 8b in the non-current capital transactions for State/American degrees and on 6a & 6b in the proficiencies in the non-current inventory if it is depreciable. For example, a tractor is non-current inventory and can be shown as beginning inventory (4c) for year 2000 on the proficiency and on the State/American degree. It should also be shown as closing inventory (4a) at a lesser amount since tractors depreciate.

		2000	2001	2002	2003
4a	closing non-current capital inventory	54000	48000	102000	90000
4b	non current capital sales	0	0	0	0
4c	beginning non-current capital inventory	60000	54000	48000	102000
4d	non-current capital purchases	0	0	60000	0

This shows depreciation over four years---one tractor from 2000 through 2003 and one from 2002 through 2003. It lost \$6,000 each year and you purchased another tractor for \$60,000 at the end of 2002. In 2003, you had \$12,000 worth of depreciation-----\$6,000 on each tractor. Having your students date their non-current depreciable assets will help with the depreciation

What is confusing to some people is that non-current non-depreciable items go here too. If you bought a 20-cow beef herd, they go here and get depreciated. If you raised them, they go here and don't get depreciated.

Also note: Some items can APPRECIATE. Explain this in the essays and/or the instructor's statement, especially if you have machinery and animals. Collectible tractors and breeding stock can appreciate and increase the values in this area and so again, EXPLAIN it.

Some applications show NO depreciation and you really can't do that without a real good explanation. Some applications have shown depreciation on the inventory pages and not having any on pages 6a-8b and/or 8a-8b.

9. What goes under current inventory at the top of 8a/b and 6a/b?

Anything you buy and sell in a year. All feed goes here, even if it is on hand on the Inventory pages (it should be in the current inventories). Market lambs, butcher hogs, market beef, all go here. You could have 300 hogs and the feed for them on hand on December 31 and sell them on January 6. \$5000 worth of feed as well as \$24,000 worth of hogs would be current inventory. Next year, you could sell all the hogs in December and only have \$1000 worth of feed on hand to make a change in current inventory of -\$28,000. A -\$28,000 inventory is hard for people to understand, but they need to see the difference in cash sales in each year. The totals are the same, but in different places. Other items here like small buckets, cattle brushes, medicine, milker inflations, etc go here too.

PROCEDURE FOR REVIEWING THE STATE FFA DEGREE APPLICATIONS

1. Applications are Due February 1st (Postmarked) to the Wisconsin FFA Center.
2. FFA Board of Directors (State FFA Officer Advisors) reviews the State FFA Degree applications using the Checklist and Review Sheet for Minimum Requirements.
3. The Wisconsin FFA Board of Directors reviews the Star applications for minimum qualifications. Those that qualify are then forward to a committee of judges that will select the 10 Star Farmer Finalists, 10 Star in Agricultural Placement Finalists, 5 Star in Agribusiness Finalists and 5 Star in Agriscience Finalists during the weekend of the State FFA Proficiency Award judging. Finalists will then be interviewed by a panel of judges at the State FFA Convention to determine the final placing.
4. Mid March - Letter of acceptance/rejection is sent to advisors. Currently there is an appeal process in place. This means that advisors may appeal the rejection if they feel there was an error in reporting the information.

The acceptance/rejection letter will also explain all the information you need for your candidate to be recognized at the State FFA Convention.

5. If your State FFA Degree Application was rejected, **you will have 2 weeks to correct the errors.** Corrected State FFA Degree applications must be sent to the Wisconsin FFA Center for final review.
6. April 1st - Final letters are sent out to report the status of the rejected State FFA Degree applications.